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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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SOURCE-MATERIAL FOR JONSON'S PLAYS

PART II

Every Man in His Humour

Dedication.

"I am none of those, that can suffer the benefits confer'd vpon my youth, to perish with my age. It is a fraile memorie, that remembers but present things." Seneca, *De Ben.*, I, xii, 2: *Apud paucos post rem manet gratia, plures sunt, apud quos non diutius in animo sunt donata quam in usu.* III, xvii, 3: *gratum hominem semper beneficium delectat, ingratum semel.* Cf. the dedication of *Poetaster*: "A thankefull man owes a courtesie euer: the vn-thankefull, but when he needes it."

Prologue.

Though need make many poets, etc.

So Persius, *Saturae*, Prol. 9:

Magister artis ingenique largitor
Venter.

III, ii:

Master Stephen has bought from Brainworm a rapier under the impression that it was a Toledo; but it is not a Toledo.

Bray. No sir, I confesse it, it is none.

Step. Doe you confesse it? gentlemen, beare witnesse, he has confest it. By gods will, and you had not confest it—

The jest is not original with Jonson. Was it original with Sir Thomas More? See *Mori Lucubrations*, 1563, 225:

RIDICULUM, IN MINACEM

Thrasonis uxorem bubuleus rusticus
 Absente eo uitiauerat.
 Domum reuersus miles ut rem comperit,
 Armatus & ferus insilit.
 Tandem assecutus solum in agris rusticum,
 Heus clamat heus heus furcifer.
 Restat bubuleus, saxaque in sinum legit.
 Ille ense stricto clamat,
 Tu coniugem meam attigisti carnifex?
 Respondit imperterritus,
 Feci. fateris, inquit? At ego omnes Deos
 Deasque testor o scelus,
 In pectus hunc ensem tibi capulo tenus,
 Ni fassus esses, abderem.

III, iii.

No greater hell, then to be slaue to feare.

Seneca is constantly emphasizing the fact that fear of what may happen is the greatest of evils. See *Ep.* xcvi, 7: *Nihil est nec miserius nec stultius quam praetimere.*

Every Man out of His Humour

Dedication.

“Yet, I command, it lye not in the way of your more noble, and vse-full studies to the publike. For so I shall suffer for it: But, when the gowne and cap is off, and the Lord of liberty raignes; then, to take it in your hands, perhaps may make some Bencher, tinted with humanity, reade: and not repent him.”

So Martial, x, xix, 12 ff.:

Sed ne tempore non tuo disertam
 Pulses ebria ianuam, videto:
 Totas dat tetricae dies Minervae,
 Seras tutior ibis ad lucernas:
 Haec hora est tua, cum furit Lyaeus,
 Cum regnat rosa, cum madent capilli:
 Tunc me vel rigidi legant Catones.

The character of Macilente.

Macilente is the embodiment of envy, not hatred, and accordingly Jonson, in the Induction between I and II, carefully distinguishes between the two emotions. It seems probable that he has here in mind Plutarch's essay, *Of Envy and Hatred* (Transl. 1870, II. 95 ff.), in which an attempt is made to analyze both feelings. “Envy and Hatred are passions so like each other that they are

often taken for the same He who is in prosperity is equally an occasion of grief to the envious and to the malicious man; therefore we look upon benevolence, which is a willing our neighbor's good, as an opposite to both envy and hatred, and fancy these two to be the same because they have a contrary purpose to that of love Hatred proceeds from an opinion that the person we hate is evil, if not generally so, at least in particular to us But envy has only one sort of object, the felicity of others. Whence it becomes infinite, and, like an evil or diseased eye, is offended with every thing that is bright. On the other hand, hatred is always determined by the subject it adheres to . . . But hatred is often just; for there are some men so much to be avoided and disliked, that we should judge those worthy to be hated themselves who do not shun and detest them Again, extreme badness makes hatred more vehement and bitter."

It will be observed that Macilente's envious disposition shows itself more and more as courtesies are done him. Fastidious Brisk carries him to Court, whereupon Macilente betrays to Deliro the fact that Brisk has no standing there. Deliro receives Macilente into his house and furnishes him with fine raiment. Thereupon Macilente seizes the opportunity to kindle discord between husband and wife, and eventually to destroy Deliro's conceit of his own happiness. This behavior is agreeable to what Plutarch says, *ibid*, 99: "Yet the first of these removes not envy, for men will persist in this vice, though they know they are not wronged; and the two latter (the esteem or credit of a person, and the bestowing a favor) do exasperate it more . . . and when they receive a kindness from any in prosperity, it is with reluctance, as though they grudged them not only the power but the will of conferring it." Compare, for instance, what Macilente says (II, iv) when Deliro welcomes him to his house 'to sojourn euen for euer':

I thanke you, sir:

And yet the muffled fates (had it pleas'd them)
Might haue suppli'd me, from their owne full store,
Without this word (I thanke you) to a foole.
I see no reason, why that dog (call'd Chaunce)
Should fawne vpon this fellow, more then me:
I am a man, and I haue limmes, flesh, bloud,
Bones, sinewes, and a soule, as well as he:
My parts are euery way as good as his,
If I said better? why, I did not lie.

At the end of the play, in the first folio version, Macilente, having succeeded in his various plots, says:

Now is my soule at peace.
I am as emptie of all enuie now,
As they of merit to be enuied at.
My humor (like a flame) no longer lasts
Then it hath stuffe to feed it, and their folly,
Being now rak't vp in their repentant ashes,
Affords no ampler subiect to my spleene.
I am so farre from malicing their states,
That I begin to pittie them. It grieues me
To thinke they haue a being. I could wish
They might turne wise vpon it, and be sau'd now,
So heauen were pleas'd."

This is almost a paraphrase of what Plutarch says, *ibid.*, 98: "So, on the other side, misfortunes cause envy to cease, but take not enmity away; for men will be malicious even toward abject enemies, but none envy the distressed. However, what was said by one of our Sophists, that the envious are tenderly inclinable to pity, is true; and in this appears a great unlikeness of these passions, that hatred leaves neither the happy nor the miserable, but envy becomes languid when its object has either prosperity or adversity in excess."

It will be observed that in the second version of the play, presented at Court, Macilente is cured of his envy, not as just described, but by the sight of the Queen.

Neuer till now did object greet mine eyes
With any light content: but in her graces,
All my malicious powers haue lost their stings.
Enuie is fled my soule, at sight of her,
And she hath chac'd all black thoughts from my bosome,
Like as the sunne doth darknesse from the world.

The thought here is not exactly the same as in the following quotation from Plutarch, p. 98, but it is very similar and the simile in the last line makes Jonson's source for the idea quite certain: "Yet envy often gives place to the splendor of a matchless prosperity. For it is not likely that any envied Alexander or Cyrus, when they arrived at the height of their conquests and became lords of all. But as the sun, where he passes highest and sends down his beams most directly, has none or very little shadow, so they who are exalted to the meridian of fortune, shining aloof over the

head of envy, have scarce any thing of their brightness eclipsed, while envy retires, being driven away by the brightness overspreading it."

While we are on the subject of envy, it may be worth remarking that this emotion has in the last few generations ceased to occupy the important literary position that it formerly held. If we may judge by the frequency with which it is spoken of and the amount of space that is devoted to an analysis and a description of it and its various forms in the older literatures, whether of the Elizabethan or the classical period, whether in the literature of England or in that of the continent, envy was considered to be one of the major passions of mankind, quite comparable in importance and interest with hate or love or ambition. Curiously enough, modern writers do not have a great deal to say about it. As a spring of human action, it has been degraded to a very low position. To some extent this degradation is due to our modern desire to cast off the shackles of literary tradition. Yet I suspect that there is more in the phenomenon than this. There has been a real change in human nature. That human nature does change can hardly be denied by anyone who considers the question and tries candidly to think it through. For better or worse, we simply are not what our ancestors were. In respect to envy, there is no doubt that it does not play the part in our lives that it formerly did, and one cause of the difference (the causes are probably numerous and complex) may be readily pointed out. Social life used to be organized on a monarchical basis. Not only was there the court of the king, but each nobleman had his own in miniature. The usual way of attaining social importance was to attach yourself to one of the larger or smaller circles centering about those whose importance was hereditary. In that circle you rose perhaps by the caprice of your patron, perhaps by your own merit, perhaps by your skill in depressing others, perhaps by flattery, perhaps by fortune. The opportunities were few, the aspirants many. "It is in kings' courts," says Lucian (Fowler's translation, iv, 5), "that these creatures are mostly found; they thrive in the atmosphere of dominion and power, where envy is rife, suspicions innumerable, and the opportunities for flattery and back-biting endless. Where hopes are higher, there envy is more intense, hatred more reckless, and jealousy more unscrupulous. They all keep close watch upon one

another, spying like duellists for a weak spot. Every one would be first, and to that end shoves and elbows his neighbour aside, and does his best to pull back or trip the man in front of him. One whose equipment is limited to goodness is very soon thrown down, dragged about, and finally thrust forth with ignominy; while he who is prepared to flatter, and can make servility plausible, is high in credit, gets first to his end, and triumphs."

The complexity of modern civilization and the corresponding complexity of modern human nature (I am not using these words without a full sense of responsibility) as conditions bearing not alone upon characterization in fiction, but also upon the choice of motives on the part of the writer and upon the relative importance which these various motives possess, afford a problem of the highest interest, and one not yet touched by systematic investigation. Tragedy is interested therein as well as comedy.

Speech to Queen Elizabeth at end of play:

O heauen, that shee (whose presence hath effected
This change in me) may suffer most late change
In her admir'd and happie gouernement.

This use of 'late' is distinctly a Latinism; the word is employed precisely as 'serus' is in a passage like the following from Seneca, *Ad Pol. de Consol.*, XII, 5: sera et nepotibus demum nostris dies nota sit, qua illum gens sua coelo adserat. So in Horace, *Carm.*, I, ii, 45: serus in caelum redeas. One can only be puzzled by the strange use to which this passage has been put by van Dam and Stoffel (*Anglia*, XXVI, 386-7) in their argument that Jonson was not responsible for the second ending in the Folio version of the play. Aside from the facts that such Latinisms were more or less characteristic of Jonson's style and that the lines are evidently a reminiscence of such Latin expressions as those quoted above, the passage is perfectly clear in itself. Macilente is not hoping that "a change might come over the Queen's admired and happy government," but is hoping that the change (when it takes place, as he knows it must) will occur as late as possible. He is praying for Elizabeth's long life. The meaning that van Dam and Stoffel attach to his words is, as they very properly point out, "absurd to a degree." But it is their meaning, not the author's.

New Inn

To the Reader.

What did they come for, then? thou wilt ask me. I will as punctually answer: To see, and to be seen.

Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, I, 99:

Spectatum veniunt; veniunt, spectentur et ipsae.

Poetaster

V, iii, 149-51.

Caes. We know it, our deare Virgil, and esteeme it
A most dishonest practice, in that man,
Will seeme too wittie in anothers worke.

Martial, preface to Lib. I: Absit a iocorum nostrorum simplicitate malignus interpres nec epigrammata mea scribat: improbe facit qui in alieno libro ingeniosus est. This passage Jonson had also in mind in his letter to Salisbury, 1605.

Last line of song at end of play.

And apes are apes, though cloth'd in scarlet.

Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, transl. repr. 1900, p. 29: "A trite proverb, That an ape will be an ape, though clad in purple"; in *Adagia*, ed. 1649, pp. 151, 192, 491, he gives various Latin and Greek instances of the use of the proverb.

Apol. Dial. 129-32.

and those so sparingly,
As all the rest might haue sate still, vnquestion'd,
Had they but had the wit, or conscience,
To thinke well of themselves.

Martial, as above: Spero me secutum in libellis meis tale temperamentum, ut de illis queri non possit quisquis de se bene senserit.

Apol. Dial. 213-5.

Where, if I proue the pleasure but of one,
So he iudicious be; He shall b'alone
A Theatre vnto me.

It may very well be that, as Gifford says, Jonson has a passage of Cicero in mind, but it is interesting to observe that another classical author, whom Jonson apparently knew as well as he did Cicero, has developed this idea at much greater length. Lucian's

Harmonides is built up entirely on this thought, except that he uses the simile of a jury rather than that of a theatre of spectators.

Some borrowings from Seneca in this dialogue are noted in the article on *Cynthia's Revels* referred to below.

Sejanus

Chapman's *In Sejanum*, 97 ff.

Performing such a lively Evidence
in thy Narrations, that thy Hearers still
Thou turnest to thy Spectators; and the sense
That thy Spectators haue of good or ill,
Thou inject'st joyntly to thy Readers soules.

Plutarch, *Whether the Athenians were more Warlike or Learned* (Translation, 1870, v, 402): "Therefore Thucydides always drives at this perspicuity, to make the hearer (as it were) a spectator, and to inculcate the same passions and perturbations of mind into his readers as they were in who beheld the causes of those effects." My note on the meaning of Chapman's lines must be accordingly modified.

Chapman, 123 ff.

so odorous Flowers
being held too neere the Sensor of our Sense,
Render not pure, nor so sincere their powers,
As being held a little distance thence;
Because much troubled Earthy parts improve them:
Which mixed with the odors we exhall,
Do vitiate what we drawe in. But remooove them
A little space, the Earthy parts do fall,
And what is pure, and hote by his tenuitye,
is to our powers of Savor purely borne.

Chapman would seem to be thinking of Plutarch, *Symposiacs*, Transl. 1870, III, 223: "Thus a rose smells most fragrant at a distance; but if you bring it near the nose, it is not so pure and delightful; and the reason is this,—many earthy disturbing particles are carried with the smell, and spoil the fragrancie when near, but in a longer passage those are lost, and the pure brisk odor, by reason of its subtilty, reaches and acts upon the sense."

Strachey's *Upon Sejanus*.

If men will shun swolne Fortunes ruinous blastes,
Let them use Temperance. Nothing violent lastes.

Seneca, *Troades*, 258 ff.

violenta nemo imperia continuit diu,
moderata durant; quoque Fortuna altius
evexit ac levavit humanas opes,
hoc se magis suppressere felicem decet
variosque casus tremere metuentem deos
nimium faventes.

I, i, 90.

God-like Cato. The phrase, as noted in my edition, is no doubt from Horace, but it is still interesting to compare Jonson's note on his use of the epithet 'god-like' in *Part of the King's Entertainment*: "An attribute giuen to great persons, fitly aboue other, humanity, and in frequent vse with all the greeke Poets, especially Homer Iliad a—*δῖος* 'Αχιλλεύς. And in the same booke.—*καί ἀντίθεον Πολύφημον*."

I, ii, 177-8.

Of all wilde beasts, preserue me from a tyranne;
And of all tame, a flatterer.

Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Wise Men*, Transl. 1870, II, 5: "Another time, in a dispute that happened in your company about the nature of beasts, you [Thales] affirmed that of wild beasts, a king, of tame, a flatterer was the worst." But in *How to Know a Flatterer from a Friend*, II, 128, this saying is attributed by Plutarch to Bias.

III, i, 87.

And may they know no riuals, but themselues.

In addition to my note on the line, cf. Seneca, *Herc. Fur.*, 83-4:

quæris Alcidaë parem?
nemo est nisi ipse: bella iam secum gerat.

III, i, 267-9.

O Ioue, let it become me
To boast my deedes, when he, whom they concerne,
Shall thus forget them.

Plutarch, *How a Man may praise Himself without being envied*, Transl. 1870, II, 309: "But self-praise is not liable to disgrace or blame when it is delicately handled by way of apology to remove a calumny or accusation. Thus Pericles: But ye are angry at me, a man inferior to none, whether it be in the understanding or

interpreting of necessary things; a man who am a lover of my country, and above the meannesses of bribes. For, in speaking with this gallantry of himself, he was not only free from arrogance, vanity, and ambition, but he demonstrated the greatness and spirit of that virtue which could not be dejected itself, and even humbled and tamed the haughtiness of envy." It is perhaps questionable whether Silius handled his self-praise very delicately, but as Afer later remarks this was a common custom of his blood.

III, i, 326 ff.

All that can happen in humanitie . . .
 . . . I'am fortified against;
 And can looke downe vpon: they are beneath me.

Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.*, v, 1: Virtus . . . omnia, quae cadere in hominem possunt, subter se habet: eaque despiciens, casus contemnit humanos.

III, iii, 38.

Who nourisheth a lyon, must obey him.

For the sentiment, see Aristophanes, *Frogs*, where the idea is applied to Alcibiades by Aeschylus: "One must not rear a lion's whelp within the city: above all not rear a lion in the city; but if one rear it, one must submit to its ways" (Arist. Bohn Lib., II, 609). The translator refers also to passages in Euripides, *Troades*, 718; *Heracleidae*, 1005; Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, 193, compares 'the famous simile in the third chorus of the *Agamemnon*.'

Barnaby Rich, *Faultes*, 1606, 41 verso, says that Aristophanes "devised a tragedie, raysing Pericles from hell," in which he uttered this sentiment concerning the lion. It would seem that the good Barnaby did not get his information at first hand.

IV, iii, 73-4:

A good man should, and must
 Sit rather downe with losse, then rise vniust.

To my note on this passage add that 'to do is worse than to suffer evil' is one of the "two famous paradoxes of Socrates" (Jowett, 3rd ed., II, 270), cf. *Gorgias*, *ibid.*, 356 ff., and see Plutarch, *How a Young Man ought to hear Poems*, Transl. 1870, II, 92. Aristotle takes the same position, *Ethics*, v, 15.

V, i, 3.

I did not liue, till now; this my first hower.

Statius, *Sylvae*, iv, ii, 12-3:

steriles transmisimus annos:

Hæc æui mihi prima dies, hæc limina vitæ.

And it is probable that in the first two lines of the scene,

Swell, swell, my ioyes: and faint not to declare
Your selues, as ample, as your causes are,

Jonson has in mind what Statius had said in the lines immediately preceding those quoted, to the effect that he cannot find words to express the joy caused him by being admitted to dine with Domitian.

Jonson refers to part of the passage from Statius in *Part of the King's Entertainment*, which it will be noticed was produced about the same time with *Sejanus*.

V, i, 21-4.

vnlesse

The gods, by mixing in the cause, would blesse
Our fortune with their conquest. That were worth
Sejanus strife, durst fates but bring it forth.

See Capaneus in Statius, *Theb.*, x, 899 ff.:

'Nullane pro trepidis,' clamabat, 'numina Thebis
Statis? ubi infandæ segnes telluris alumni,
Bacchus et Alcides? pudet instigare minores.
Tu potius venias (quis enim concurrere nobis
Dignior?' etc.

Volpone

III, i, 11 ff.

almost

All the wise world is little else, in nature,
But Parasites, or Sub-parasites. And, yet,
I meane not those, that haue your bare towne-arte,
To know, who's fit to feede 'hem; haue no house,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for mens eares, to bait that sense; or get
Kitchin-inuention, and some stale receipts
To please the belly, and the groine; nor those,
With their court-dog-tricks, that can fawne, and fleere,
Make their reuennue out of legs, and faces,

Echo my-Lord, and lick away a moath:
 But your fine, elegant rascall, that can rise . . .
 Present to any humour, all occasion;
 And change a visor, swifter, then a thought.

I rather suspect that Mosca was here recalling Plutarch, *How to tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, Translation of 1870, II, 103-4: "If you would learn the character of a true subtle flatterer, who nicks his point *secundum artem*, you must not, with the vulgar, mistake those sordid smell-feasts and poor trencher-slaves for your men, who begin to prate as soon as they have washed their hands in order to dinner, as one says of them, and ere they are well warmed with a good cut of the first dish and a glass of wine, betray the narrow soul that acts them by the nauseous and fulsome buffoonery they vent at table . . . Nor must we, again, confine our notions of flatterers to those sharpening fellows who ply about rich men's tables, whom neither fire nor sword nor porter can keep from supper; nor yet to such as were those female parasites of Cyprus, who going into Syria were nick-named Steps, because they cringed so to the great ladies of that country that they mounted their chariots on their backs . . . [But] He who neither professes nor seems to flatter; who never haunts your kitchen, is never observed to watch the dial that he may nick your supper-time; who won't drink to excess, but will keep his brains about him," etc.

And p. 107: "But the flatterer . . . leads not a life properly his own, but forms and moulds it according to the various humors and caprices of those he designs to bubble, is never one and the same man, but a mere dapple or trimmer, who changes shapes with his company, like water that always turns and winds itself into the figure of the channel through which it flows." And Plutarch then goes on to develop this theme at length, still keeping in mind the more skilful type of flatterer. That one or two expressions in this speech of Mosca came from Theophrastus is noted by Gifford and by Baldwin (*Mod. Lang. Notes*, xvi, 193). I think Holt's belief (*Mod. Lang. Notes*, xx, 164 ff., *Notes on Ben Jonson's Volpone*) that the character of Mosca is due to English dramatic tradition might be somewhat modified by examining what Plutarch has to say on the parasite in this essay. For, as Plutarch describes him, the more skilful parasite has just that "rare genius for knavery" upon which Holt lays stress. He complies with his patron in just Mosca's fashion, and displays just the same willingness to feed his

lusts and forward his designs. Elsewhere, as I point out in the article on *Underwoods* mentioned below,² Jonson borrows from this same essay of Plutarch's, a fact which strengthens the suggestion that he had it in mind in the character of Mosca.

IV, i.

Sir Politic's project for the restraint of tinder-boxes in order to safeguard the arsenal would seem to be suggested by Aristophanes, *Acharnians*; the informer brings to light a plot to burn the arsenal with the wick of a lamp which might be fixed on the back of a cockroach, which might float with it into the arsenal, with a north-east wind (cf. Frere's translation). I have not seen Bang's article on the sources of *Volpone* in the *Mélanges Godefroid Kurth*, Liège, 1908. The edition of *Volpone* in the Yale series by L. H. Holt has not yet been printed, but I take it that the editor's chief contributions to the study of sources are in the article above referred to. The edition by Wilkins, mentioned in *Camb. Hist. of Engl. Lit.*, vi, 417, I have not been able to trace.

IV, v. In Voltore's speech at the trial occurs the line,

Mischiefe doth euer end, where it begins.

Whalley very properly conjectured 'never' for 'ever,' and Gifford adopted the conjecture. If Whalley's emendation needs support, the following passage in Valerius Maximus, ix, i, 2, affords it: neque enim ullum vitium finitur ibi, ubi oritur.

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² Perhaps it should be said that the article here printed is supplemented by articles on the *Epigrams*, *Forest*, and *Underwoods* already accepted by *Modern Philology* and *Classical Philology*, and by one on *Cynthia's Revels* in the *Flügel Memorial Volume*.